

Letter to Council

January 30, 2013

Congregation Council
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
2515 Waugh Drive
Houston, TX 77006

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Information withheld from congregation

Council has received my letter of October 11, 2012 concerning conversations that took place in the open Council Business Meeting of October 7, 2012. The points of the open business meeting that were to be withheld from the congregation include the following:

- (1) First is the discussion involving the \$5,000 termite problem and a recently discovered plumbing problem.
- (2) Second is the discussion about secretary [first last]’s low level of performance. The discussion involved the importance of documenting his performance in order to justify his termination and the importance of doing this quickly. There was some discussion on helping [first last] improve his skills though this was very sketchy.
- (3) Third is the discussion involving Pastor Lura not being able to cash her check (or be completely paid) due to lack of money in the bank. This was a repeat problem.

Clearly this matter is not popular. It appears that Council has outsourced this matter to the Mutual Ministry Team, perhaps in an effort to remove it from the venue of a public business meeting and into a venue where an argument can be more easily made that the matter is of an “exempt” nature. This old dog won’t hunt.

Lack of quorum at the January 28, 1013 meeting

I was present at the January 27, 2013 get-together. We lacked a quorum and therefore could not conduct a “business meeting.” One member pointed out that this was indicative that we had a problem and suggested that members might think that their opinions were so unlikely to be listened to that it was not worth their time to be present. I pointed out that Council had received some letters from me and had essentially been non-responsive.

Slate of candidates picked by the current MGP board

At the get-together we were given a two-page document titled *Candidates for 2013 Montrose Place Board of Directors*.

“Please acquaint yourself with this year’s candidates for Board of Directors of Montrose Grace Place by reviewing the following biographies. If elected, these five board members will serve from 2013 to 2015. The candidates, presented as a slate by the current MGP board, will be voted upon by members of Grace Lutheran Church at the Annual Meeting, Part II on January 27, 2013.

If you have any questions, please contact MGP board members Pr. Lura Groen, Hal Core or Craig Hopkins.

Clearly nobody in charge wanted the congregation to get too acquainted with the slate of candidates in advance of the January 17, 2013 get-together. The premise “if elected” is presumptuous, as there is nobody else to vote for. It is quite presumptuous to invite folks to “contact MGP board members Pr. Lura Groen, Hal Core or Craig Hopkins” if they “have any questions,” as we received the document only minutes before the anticipated vote.

I fail to see the benefit of the “current MGP board” presenting the five candidates “as a slate.” A reasonable argument can be made that anyone who is a member of Council ought not concurrently serve on the MGP board. Also the slate nomination method has a tendency to perpetuate the present mindset, and it appears that this will be prolonged for another two years. Perhaps this comports with the GLC’s Bylaws and the MGP’s Bylaws; I do not know as I have never seen either. It would be nice if such material were available on our Website.

My letters to Council

Council has my following letters:

1. My Letter to Council dated October 1, 2012
2. My Letter to Council dated October 10, 2012
3. My Letter to Council dated December 9, 2012
4. My letter to Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod dated January 1, 2013
5. My Letter to Council dated January 18, 2013

Except for my 1/1/2013 letter, the above-mentioned letters should have been part of one or more open business meetings. They are non-exempt material and should be as accessible as business minutes. I am now declaring the 1/1/2013 letter as non-exempt.

Grace’s history

Grace Lutheran Church was organized in 1921. About ninety-one years of material is squirreled away somewhere and accessible by only a few privileged people. Information is power. Like all power, there are those who do not want to share it. Please see **Appendix I** for a couple of interesting images.

One can use his imagination to figure out what happened between 1998 and 2000. Perhaps there is information on this subject in a file cabinet. In any event, Grace has not yet recovered from the impact.

Assertions being made about me

On December 13, 2012 an accusation was leveled against me. I responded in my letter of January 1, 2013 to the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod inviting the production of “real evidence that justifies the accusation.” In spite of my letter and there having been no evidence presented, I was appalled at the email I received on January 18, 2013. It was from Pastor Lura and it was sent to Bridget Jensen, Hal Core, Barbara Carol, [first last], Randy Bratsven, Steve Walker, Charles Wilson, Suzannah Bryan, Nick Candelaria, and me. The email contained assertions about me that appear to be based on what someone said about what someone else said, etc. Two assertions in particular deserve extra attention.

- (1) “The issue was that he had volunteered to run the church’s webpage, but was representing the congregation much differently than they wished to be represented, was not responsive to the congregation asking him to represent them differently, and refused to turn over passwords and control of the webpage when asked to.”
- (2) “There was also some misuse of electronic documents such as church mailing lists.”

[1] I did not represent the congregation in any way, and I never received a request to represent the congregation differently. I never had password(s) to the church webpage, I never had any control of the church’s webpage, and I never received a request to turn over passwords and control of the webpage.

[2] I did not misuse electronic documents, or any mailing list.

If anyone has real evidence to the contrary, I would be willing to look at it. I have no control over people being uneducated, unaware, uninformed, gullible, or their propensity to engage in idle talk. I have no control over what people say, what they hear, what they attempt to repeat, or their accuracy in paraphrasing.

Problems will not fix themselves

We have some problems that we all need to work on. We will not fix them with exclusive groups that have access to certain information while others are excluded. We will not fix them with cliques and idle talk. We will not fix them with the ostrich approach, or using one's position to bully and manipulate, or by suspending common sense.

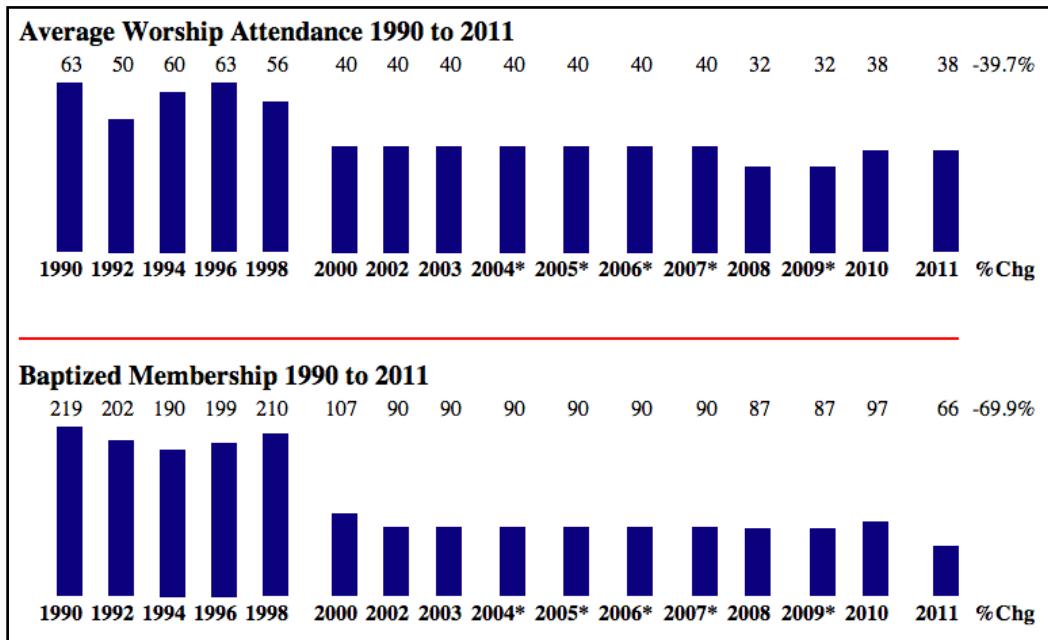
There is presently no formal procedure for a member to address Council with a question, concern, or complaint and expect real action.

Please make this letter part of your next open business meeting.

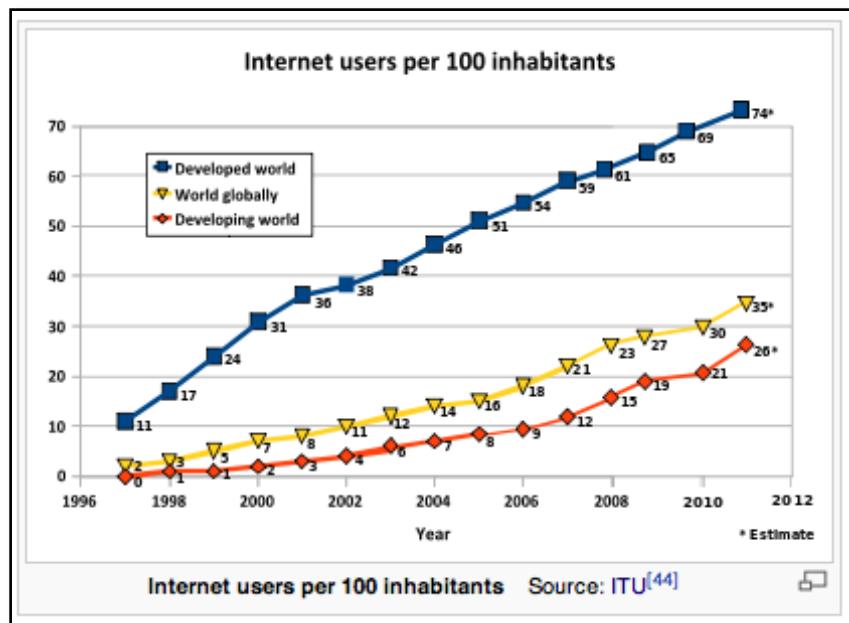
CD

Charlie Dean

Appendix I.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Congregation Trend Report
<http://archive.elca.org/ScriptLib/RE/Trendnet/cdsTrendNet.asp?Id=CCC1A2EAD79DC3AFA7D9C2CCC3B4AFE0B4A9E7C2B2C194B4DCE0C3C9D5B5B5CAEF98CBD6D7F09C8D>



Internet. (2012, July 16). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 14:08, July 17, 2012, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Internet&oldid=502651873>